

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 INR-07 L-03

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SAJ-01 DODE-00 H-02 NSC-05 SS-15 OMB-01 AID-05 EA-06

SAM-01 /087 W

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R 271047Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6183

INFO USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

COMSIXTHFLT

CINCUSNAVEUR

DOCOSOUTH FOR CINCSOUTH

CINCEUR

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 0574

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, MT, US, UR

SUBJECT: MINTOFF'S VIEWS UNCHANGED ON US AND SOVIET FLEETS
IN MALTA

REFS: (A) VALLETTA 0311; (B) VALLETTA 0560 (NOTAL)

1. IN MAY 22 CONVERSATION WITH JOE CAMILLERI, MINTOFF'S
PRINCIPAL AIDE AND PRIVATE SECRETARY, AMBASSADOR ASKED
WHETHER THERE HAD BEEN ANY CHANGE IN PRIME MINISTER'S
POLICY TOWARD VISITS TO MALTA OF U.S. NAVY VESSELS.
CALILLERI SAID POLICY REMAINED THE SAME AS STATED OFTEN
IN PAST, I.E., GOM WAS STRIVING TOWARD MAKING THE
MEDITERRANEAN A "SEA OF PEACE" AND THEREFORE WANTED NO
MILITARY PRESENCE OR SHIP VISITS BY "SUPER PWERS"-- EITHER
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US OR SOVIET NAVIES. CAMILLERI ANTICIPATED NO CHANGE IN

THAT POSITION, WHICH WOULD REMAIN EVEN IF CREWS OF SUCH VESSELS WORE CIVILIAN CLOTHES ASHORE. U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL WERE WELCOME TO VISIT MALTA AT ANY TIME (WEARING CIVVIES) IN PRIVATE, TOURIST CAPACITY, BUT TO PERMIT SHIPS VISITS BY USN WOULD ONLY INTENSIFY PRESSURE ON GOM FROM SOVIETS FOR SAME PRIVILEGE.

2. IN RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR'S QUESTION ABOUT SOVIET "PRESSURE", CAMILLERI SAID GOM HAD BEEN APPROACHED BEFORE BY SOVIETS RE POSSIBLE SHIP VISITS. LATEST EXAMPLE OCCURRED DURING MINTOFF'S RECENT VISIT TO LIBYA (REFTEL B), WHEN LIBYANS MADE PITCH TO MINTOFF "ON BEHALF OF THE RUSSIANS" TO PERMIT CALLS AT VALLETTA BY USSR VESSELS. ACCORDING TO CAMILLERI, MINTOFF RESPONDED TO LIBYANS WITH A FLAT NO, AND DID SO WITHOUT ANY REFERENCE OR LINKAGE TO GOM'S POSTURE TOWARD USN VISITS. CAMILLERI STRESSED THE EXTREME SENSITIVITY OF THIS EXCHANGE AND ASKED AMBASSADOR NOT TO MENTION IT TO MINTOFF OR OTHER CABINET MINISTERS. HE ADDED THAT GOM RELATIONS WITH SOVIETS REMAINED VERY COOL, THOSE WITH PRC AND LIBYA "GOOD".

3. COMMENT: CAMILLERI'S REITERATION OF GOM VIEWS ON THIS SUBJECT MAKES CLEAR AGAIN THAT THERE IS NO LIKELIHOOD OF RESUMPTION OF SIXTH FLEET VISITS TO MALTA WHILE MINTOFF IS PRIME MINISTER. GENERAL ELECTION WILL BE HELD IN NEXT YEAR OR SO, AND RECENT INJECTION OF SIXTH FLEET VISIT QUESTION INTO ALREADY ACTIVE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN WILL NOT HELP OUR CAUSE. OPPOSITION NATIONALIST PARTY SPOKESMEN REPEATEDLY STRESS MALTA'S NATURAL POSITION AS CHRISTIAN, EUROPEAN COUNTRY WHICH SHOULD HAVE STRONG TIES WITH NATO AND WELCOME USN VISITS. MINTOFF'S LABOR PARTY HAS LASHED BACK WITH CRITICISM OF PAST SHIP VISITS UNDER FORMER NATIONALIST GOVERNMENT AND ASSERTION OF LABOR'S UNWILLINGNESS TO PERMIT MALTA AGAIN TO BE USED AS "BROTHEL" FOR AMERICAN SAILORS. SHOULD NATIONALISTS WIN ELECTION, WE WILL BE INVITED BACK WITH ALACRITY, BUT THIS IS NOT A LIELY OUTCOME UNLESS MINTOFF STUMBLES BADLY IN COMING MONTHS. SMITH

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